

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 26507 072025Z

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3995

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 26507

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FN, VS, FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH REPORT OF DRV VIEWS ON THE SITUATION IN
SOUTH VIETNAM

REF: (A) SAIGON 13830 (B) PARIS 25784

1. IN TOUR D'HORIZON OF SITUATION IN INDOCHINA, QUAI
DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ASIA BOLLE ELABORATED ON REPORT HE
HAD GIVEN TO EMBOFF (REF B). BOLLE CONFIRMED THAT SOURCE
WAS DRV AMBASSADOR, VO VAN SUNG AND OBSERVED THAT THE
APPRAISAL REPRESENTED THE OFFICIAL DRV LINE. SUNG SAID
THAT THE OPPOSITION MOVEMENT IN SOUTH VIETNAM HAS BECOME
SO STRONG THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF THE RESIGNATION OF
PRESIDENT THIEU BECOMES VERY REAL. THE DRV OF COURSE
SUPPORTS THE POSITION OF THE PRG AND HOPES THAT A NEW
TEAM WILL COME TO POWER IN SAIGON WHICH WILL BE PREPARED
TO SOLVE THE SVN PROBLEM. THE "THIRD FORCE" WHICH
EXISTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND IN PARIS' WILL NECESSARILY
HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY. (ACCORDING TO BOLLE SUNG REFERRED
TO A "THIRD FORCE", NOT JUST A THIRD COMPONENT IN THE
NCNRC.) SUNG INSISTED THAT IT WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION
FOR THE DRV TO UNDERTAKE A MILITARY OFFENSIVE; THE DRV
IS TOO MUCH INVOLVED IN RECONSTRUCTION TO PERMIT ITSELF
TO DO SO. FOR HANOI, THE MAJOR PROBLEM IS ECONOMY
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PAGE 02 PARIS 26507 072025Z

2. BOLLE SAID THAT AMBASSADOR CHAYET IN HANOI HAD NOT AS YET REPORTED A DRV REACTION TO THE SAIGON DISTURBANCES, AND AMBASSADOR MERILLON IN SAIGON HAD NOT YET SENT IN HIS OVER-ALL APPRAISAL. BOLLE NOTED THAT MERILLON WAS VERY SENSITIVE TO ANY POSSIBILITY OF GVN CRITICISM OF FRENCH INVOLVEMENT IN THE GVN'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS; HE HAD GIVEN SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS THAT NONE OF HIS STAFF BECOME INVOLVED WITH OPPOSITION MOVEMENTS. BOLLE THOUGHT THAT THIEU'S REFERENCES TO "COLONIALISTS" IN HIS NOVEMBER 1 SPEECH WERE DIRECTED AT THE TRADITIONAL FRENCH HOSPITALITY WHICH GOF HAS ACCORDED FRANCE TO MANY VIETNAMESE DISSIDENTS, THE MOST RECENT BEING LAWYER NGUYEN LONG.

3. AS SUGGESTED PARA 1 REF A, EMBOFF STRESSED THE STABILITY OF THE GVN PRINCIPAL POWER ELEMENTS DESPITE RECENT PERTURBATIONS AND DREW ON OTHER SAIGON MESSAGES MENTIONED REF A. BOLLE, WHO HAS OFTEN BEEN A RATHER MORE BALANCED OBSERVER THAN SOME OF HIS QUAI COLLEAGUES, RECOGNIZES THE ELEMENTS OF STABILITY IN THE GVN'S POWER STRUCTURE. HE AGREED GVN COULD RIDE OUT ANTI-CORRUPTION DEMONSTRATIONS AND COULD POSSIBLY BE STRENGTHENED BY ACTIONS AGAINST SOME OF THOSE GUILTY OF MOST FLAGRANT CORRUPTION. BOLLE CONTINUED TO THINK THAT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IN SOUTH VIETNAM STEMMING FROM WORLD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS AND REDUCED U.S. AID PRESENTED A GREATER AND MORE UNPREDICTABLE LONG TERM CHALLENGE TO THE GVN.
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